The Seniorite

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Grads pursue non-college paths

By Anna Hutt
SENIOR 'RITER

Graduates of the class of 2004 prove that all roads do not lead to university.

Despite the criticism that Shaker is a college-obsessed community, members of this year's graduating class made plans beyond the confines of university campuses. Senior Joseph Lesnefsky, for example, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps.

"The military and stuff has always interested me," Lesnefsky said. During his junior year, he decided to make the interest a reality instead of following the typical college path., though others have been less quick to accept his uncommon choice.

"Everyone has been trying to talk me out of it," Lesnefsky said. "One kid said to me, 'Haha, you're going to get shot...'"

Also difficult to ignore were the concerns of his parents.

"They're still not happy about it," Lesnefsky said. "It was mostly an issue of, 'I don't want my son talking to a recruiter who will do anything to fill his quota.'"

These apprehensions mirrored the thoughts of Damita Walker, mother of senior Albert Walker, when he decided to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps as well.

"With all the stuff that's going on, I think he should wait," Damita said, noting that international unrest and shaky relations with other countries will make her more nervous about her son's whereabouts next year.

In addition to parental pressure, the guidance department can be an extra stressor. Lesnefsky informed his counselor of his plans to join the U.S. Marine Corps and enlisted before senior year, but when he was called to the guidance office this past fall to discuss his future plans, his counselor said, "Oh, you're still doing that?"

"It's a binding commitment," Lesnefsky said, adding that many people don't understand the gravity and finality of his choice. "You can't just get up and leave."

Walker, on the other hand, felt full support from the guidance department. "My counselor basically said, 'Good luck and be careful,'" he recalled.

Lesnefsky confirmed that many teachers commended his decision. "Some of them said, 'Good job. Congratulations for stepping up and serving our country,'" he said, adding that many instructors were pleased that he will attend university after the Marines.

Though she plans to wait only one year before beginning her college education, senior Laura Mizer will fulfill a childhood fantasy next year by dancing with the Pittsburgh Ballet

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> "Everyone has been trying to talk me out of it. One kid said to me, 'Haha, you're going to get shot.'"
>
> Joe Lesnefsky
> senior

Stacking on senior day

Emily Ozan • THE SHAKERITE

SENIORS ELIANA PENZNER, Charles Reynolds, Jesse Cowan, Kevin Madison, Arden McWilliams, Adam Gall, Ben Atkinson, Chris Lassiter, Devon Cherry and David Schwarz form a senior pyramid while seniors Matt O'Bryon and Alex Frank look on.

Griffith reflects

By Emily Ozan and Kelly Schaefer
SENIOR 'RITERS

The Shakerite asked Principal Michael Griffith to share his reflections on the first class that he coached through all four years of at Shaker Heights High School.

Q: How has this class shaped your impression of Shaker?

A: Seeing their energy and time commitment to academics has been beautiful to watch. This class has been very good at putting things out on the table; they've been willing to say what's there: in the paper, in meetings and on TV.

Q: What have you learned about being a good principal from this class?

A: I think with each passing year, I've learned more and more to trust in the maturity and the commitment of young people to do good things and the right things... Trust has been something I've learned a lot more.

Q: Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently with the class of 2004?

A: I think in my earlier years I was probably tempted to be more controlling than I am now. A part of it is developing the right balance of trust. As my dad would say, the good referees are the ones you don't see. I try to stay out of the way.

SEE GRIFFITH, PAGE 4

List benefits community

This month, the 13 senior editors of The Shakerite met to discuss whether or not to print a list of seniors' post-high school plans. By a count of nine to four, the editors voted to publish it. Although last year's senior editors decided against running the list, we feel that there are sufficient reasons to warrant its publication.

Through written forms and phone calls, The Shakerite gave the graduates of 2004 the chance to indicate plans for the future, whether it involved college, work, the military or other goals. Each of the published seniors granted permission for The Shakerite's list to include these plans.

In suspending the 2003 list, last year's editors wrote that the list exacerbated college hysteria in Shaker. However, printing the list does not aggravate this problem. The extremely competitive atmosphere and stress of the college application process remains even though no list was published last year. The problem is the nature of the community, not the list; pressure to enroll in high level classes and the urgings of overzealous parents and counselors are often at fault. In addition, we feel that by giving students the option to withhold their plans, we have taken measures to alleviate any anxiety the list might create.

The 2003 editors stated that publishing the list perpetuates a belief that one college is superior to another and that people read it just to see who is and is not headed for "elite" universities. However, withholding the list for this reason only strengthens this belief by accepting it as valid. We firmly believe that graduating from Shaker is an accomplishment in itself, one that merits recognition. Not printing the list sends the message that successfully completing a Shaker education is not good enough unless one plans to attend a traditional college.

'Rite Idea

Printing the list gives graduates an opportunity to acknowledge their accomplishments and those of their classmates. Our intention is to allow students and community members to take pride in their education and keep track of one another after graduation. Suppressing the list is unfair to those who use it appropriately. The class of 2004 has had a positive impact on the school and the Shaker community, and this list will allow people to know what's ahead for the students who may have made a difference in their lives.

College hysteria continues

For many years, The Shakerite published what came to be known as "the college list," a page detailing seniors' future plans. Last year, senior Shakerite editors voted not to publish the list and printed an editorial explaining their decision. This year, senior editors reversed that decision. Only four of 13 seniors voted against publishing the list.

The nine seniors who voted for it applauded the use of the list as a networking tool for underclassmen selecting colleges and a directory for seniors trying to stay in contact with friends. In reality, most students already know where their close friends are headed, and underclassmen can consult their guidance counselors for that information.

Some students appreciate the "pat on the back" that the list offers. Walking across the stage at graduation should be satisfaction enough, regardless of one's future plans.

In a letter to the Sun Press, a Shaker parent claimed, "People are much more accepting than the staff realizes." But high school students who experience college pressure first-hand are much more qualified to assess those attitudes. And although Guidance Department Chairwoman Eileen Blattner said in a recent Shakerite article, "As long as [students] can say 'no comment,' it shouldn't place pressure on them," often students with alternative plans don't submit them for publication precisely because of these pressures.

Whether we want to believe it or not, the Shaker community is obsessed with educational achievement, as any community built around its schools would be. A community should be proud of its schools and its students. But when it comes to college, this community has gone too far. The list only provides yet another opportunity for people to pass judgment on graduates -- at the expense of The Shakerite.

Although, as one Shaker parent put it in a letter to the Sun Press, "Criticism for inaccuracy goes with the territory," the penalties for mistakes on the list are incalculable. For an affected student, the grief resulting from a mistake on the list is a horrible way to end one's high school career.

Ultimately, for The Shakerite, the negative effects outweigh the positive ones, and we should not publish the senior list. If the list embraced other postgraduate plans, and the community backed off from the college mania, only then could the list be a positive addition to The Shakerite.

Class of '04 *is out the door*

As their high school experience comes to an end, Shaker seniors look forward to continuing their adventures through future endeavors, whatever they may be. The senior list features post-high school plans of all seniors who responded to a class-wide survey in English classes or to telephone interviews.

·A·

Benjamin Abelson - Amherst College
Anna Abrams - Indiana University
Danesha Adams - University of California-Los Angeles
Nicholas Agich - The Ohio State University
William Ajayi - Kent State University
Sam Alexander - University of Akron
Michael Amaddio - Berklee College of Music
Alexander Anderson - University of Cincinnati
Hayes Anderson - American University
Lauren Ashford - University of Akron
Benjamin Atkinson - The Ohio State University
Jessica Axel - Brandeis University

·B·

Jennifer Baker - University of Toledo
Daniel Barach - Earlham College
Jabari Batth - Fisk University
Deborah Beim - Columbia University
Michael Bell, Jr. - Michigan State University
Paul Bixenstine - Brown University
Ethan Blaine - Cuyahoga Community College
Amelie Bohanon - Cleveland State University
Caleb Bonar - Bowling Green State University
Michael Bonner - Cuyahoga Community College
Alex Boyd - Edinboro University
Allen Boyd - Penn State University
Leslie Brandon - University of Michigan
Jordan Bray - Washington and Jefferson College
Loresha Britton - Kent State University
Lindsey Brizendine - Earlham College
Jermaine Brown - Ohio University
India Browne - Cuyahoga Community College
Cleveland Clinic Nursing Program
Jason Bryant - Hocking College
Alexandra Buder-Shapiro - University of Pennsylvania

·C·

Rachel Cahn - Miami University of Ohio
Robert Cameron - Study Abroad program
Alexander Campbell - Miami University of Ohio
Sarah Cannon - The George Washington University
Jory Carver - The Ohio State University
Vernon Chambers - University of Akron
Blake Chapman - Horticulture School
Brian Cherchiglia - Berklee College of Music
Devon Cherry - University of Cincinnati
Christopher Chin - Duke University
Robin Chisholm - University of Akron
Brittany Clair - William Smith College
Christen Claytor - Miami University of Ohio
Sarah Cohen - Ohio University
Courtney Conwell - Duquesne University
Maya Cooper - University of Akron
Kristiaun Copez-Minor - Kent State University
Paul Corbin - Ohio University
Tyla Corbin - Wittenberg University
Caitlin Corrigan - Carnegie Mellon University
Jesse Cowan - University of Colorado
Moira Coyne - University of Toledo
Brandon Curtain - University of Cincinnati

·D·

Raymond Daley - Muskingum College
Jessamyn Davis - Kalamazoo College
Sierra Delgado - Florida A&M University
Sales Representative for Pepsi
Hannah Devey - Carnwall College
Hallie Dietsch - Colgate University
Jonathan Distad - Ohio Wesleyan University
Eriane Dyson - Tiffin University

·E·

Allie Edelsberg - Ohio University
Zack Edelsberg - Ohio University
Kathleen Eunice - Miami University of Ohio
Daniel Evans - University of Cincinnati
Tempa Evans - Tiffin University

·F·

Laura Falender - Wellesley College
Amani Floyd - Vanderbilt University
Alexander Frank - University of Vermont
Mitchell Frank - Johns Hopkins University
Renee Frantz - University of Wisconsin
Morissa Freiberg - Ohio University
Samuel Freilich - Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering
Patrick Fucile - Hocking College
Stephanie Fungsang - Wesleyan University

·G·

Carletta Gaddis - Cleveland State University
Adam Gall - Columbia University
Alex Garner - University of Washington
Bridget Gilbride - University of Wisconsin
Kathryn Glass - University of Michigan
Jacqueline Gleisser - Boston University
Marjorie Glick - Vanderbilt University
Nicole Goddard - Cornell University
Emmett Goodman - Pratt Art Institute
Alexandra Gordon - University of Pittsburgh
De'angela Grant - Florida State University
Maia Greene-Havas - The Ohio State University
Michelle Grossman - Boston University
Annie Gugliotta - Maryland Institute College of Art

·H·

Benjamin Haber - The Ohio State University
Ryan Hacala - Washington University in St. Louis
Karelle Hall - Dartmouth College
Clifford Harding IV - Northwestern University
Andrew Harris - United States Army
James Harris - Benedict College
Ryan Harris - University of Richmond
William Harwood - Hobart College
Montana Hayes - Alabama A & M University
Steven Heard - Clemson University
Brett Heeger - Brown University
Lasaundra Henderson - Hampton University
Serena Hendricks - Cleveland State University
Travis Henry - Ohio University
Abby Hexter - The George Washington University
Nicole Holley - University of Pittsburgh
Kathleen Holmes - American River College
Kelly Holmes - American Musical and Dramatic Academy
Corey Holowach - Norwich University
Andrew Hopkins - University of Cincinnati
Penelope Hoyett - Kent State University
Brittany Hughes - U.S. Air Force
Kenelle Hughley - University of Detroit Mercy
Julia Hurst - Miami University of Ohio
Keltress Hutcherson - undecided
Anna Hutt - Study in Israel
Washington University in St. Louis

·I·

Timothy Israel - Carnegie Mellon University
William Issa - Case Western Reserve University

·J·

David Jackson - Mount Union College
Christopher Janata - Elon University
Andrea Jeffries - University of Akron
Ashlee Jeter - Baldwin-Wallace College
Jerrell Johnson - Ohio Wesleyan University
Rikiea Johnson - Huron School for Nursing
Paige Jones - The Ohio State University
Samantha Jones - Bowling Green State University
Sara Juengst - Vanderbilt University
Zachary Juresko - Indiana University

·K·

Rachel Kaplan - University of Rochester
Maxwell Karlin - Ohio University
Raghuraj Kasturi - Case Western Reserve University
Lori Kauffman - Northeastern University
Steve Kawalek - Indiana University
December Kinney - Washington University in St. Louis
Nelly Kirara - Cleveland State University
Matthew Knittel - Allegheny College
Emily Koelewyn - Northwood University
Timothy Kolb - Wake Forest University
Jessica Koler - Ohio University
Michael Koler - Duke University

·L·

Sara Langhinrichs - Macalester College
Christian Lassiter - Central State University
Helen Lawson - Otterbein College (nursing)
Catherine Lee - Cornell University
Hyun Young Lee - Princeton University
Kate Lefloria - University of Akron
Erika Leibovitch - Miami University of Ohio
Zachary Lemer - The Ohio State University
Joseph Lesnefsky - U.S. Marine Corps
Georgia Lewis - Lewis and Clark University
Jessica Loeb - University of Cincinnati
Amber Lovejoy-Rezek - Ohio University
Sylvester Lyons - Urbana University

·M·

Denise Mack - Miami University of Ohio
Roy Madison, Jr. - Ohio University
Athenne Martinez-Hulse - Cleveland State University
Brian Math - University of Virginia
Erica McClendon - University of Cincinnati
Aulette McLaren - Akron University
Arden McWilliams - Miami University of Ohio
Jasmine Merriweather - West Virginia University
Leah Michelson - The College of Wooster
Shane Miki - University of Hawaii
Dmitriy Mikin - Boston University
Jessica Miller - Syracuse University
Ardran Mills - University of Akron
Ashleigh Mills - DePaul University
Gawain Minor - Urbana University
Chanel Mitchell - Bowling Green State University
Laura Mizer - Pittsbugh Ballet Theater
Indiana University
David Morgenstern - Duke University
John Mulligan - undecided
Saliha Muttalib - Bowling Green State University

·N·

James Naylor III - Myers University
Erin Neal - Baldwin-Wallace College
James Neal - Baldwin-Wallace College
Addy Neilson - Bowling Green State University
Athena Nimmer - Hampton University

·O·

Matthew O'Bryon - Indiana University
Daniel O'Connell - Miami University of Ohio
Stephen O'Connell - Miami University of Ohio
Margaret O'Dwyer - Buffalo College
Eileen O'Neill - New York University
Kristen Owen - College of Charleston
Emily Ozan - University of Pennsylvania

·P·

Markos Papachristou - Case Western Reserve University
Christopher Patterson - Indiana University
Vince Pavlish - Georgetown University
Elisha Perzner - Occidental College
Ashlee Petures - Bowling Green State University
Megan Pirrung - Bowling Green State University
Shira Polster - Harvard University
David Powers Jr. - University of Michigan
Lonnie Pratt - University of Akron
David Pretzer - Massachusetts Institue of Technology
Kenneth Priest - West Virginia State College

·R·

Kathleen Rains - Washington University in St. Louis
Ashley Rance - University of Toledo
Christian Ratcliffe - Virginia Marty College
Charles Reynolds - Marietta College
Lauren Robinson - Northwestern University
Cody Rose - The George Washington University
Alexandra Russo - Loyola University Chicago
Monica Ruzic - Kent State University

·S·

Kyan Safavi - Yale University
Kelly Schaefer - University of Pennsylvania
Ellis Schleman - Arizona State University
Harry Schnur - Bowdoin College
Alix Schrager - Barnard College
Martin Schultz - The Ohio State University
David Schwarz - University of Michigan
Matthew Seidner - Boston University
William Seitz III - Johns Hopkins University
Christina Senagore - University of Michigan
Andrew Shen - Purdue University
Dominique Sherrill - Cleveland State University
Amber Shields - Cuyahoga Community College
Carlton Simmons - Cuyahoga Community College
Selena Simmons-Duffin - Stanford University
Ashley Simpson - Clemson University
Nadia Singh - Kent State University
Ashali Singham - Yale University
Laura Smith - Cuyahoga Community College
Rachel Smith - The George Washington University
Jonathan Stange - Bates College
Gavin Stephens - Bowling Green State University
Jennifer Stern - Kenyon College
Janell Sterrett - Xavier University
Ryan Stewart - Thiel College, Junior Penguins hockey
Isaac Stout - Full Sail University
Kevin Strang - Skidmore College
Elisa Super - University of Cincinnati
Christopher Sweeney - College of Wooster
Stephanie Szendrey - Bowling Green State University

·T·

Jussi Tahtinen - Northwestern University
Jordan Tayer - Portland State University
Robbie Taylor - Freelance photographer
Akanksha Thakur - Case Western Reserve University
Ladawn Thomas - Spelman College
Michael Thomas - Wright State University
Dominic Thompson - Florida International University
Brandie Turner - Hiram College
Cherrelle Turner - Ohio University

·V·

Mark Vieyra - Columbia University

·W·

Christine Wagner - Clemson University
Erika Waites - Prairie View A&M University
Albert Walker - U.S. Marine Corps
Nakia Walker - Hiram College
Melissa Walton - Loyola University Chicago
Marcus Warren - Horticulture School
Winston Weatherspoon - Georgetown University
Lauren Weaver - Boston College
Lindsey Weed - Ohio Dominican University
Nadav Weinberg - Case Western Reserve University
Eric Weiss - The Ohio State University
William Werner - Ohio University
Jasmine White - Florida A & M University
Amanda Whitman-Rush - Miami University of Ohio
Jacob Wick - Indiana University
Cassidi Williams - The Ohio State University
Chelo Williams - Ohio University
Colleen Williams - Hunter College
Morghan Williams - Hampton University
Omar Williams - Cleveland State University
Penny Willis - Kent State University
Ashley Wood - Duquesne University
Krystal Workman - Notre Dame College of Ohio

·Z·

Michael Zucker - Bowling Green State University

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This list of students is based on the most recently updated records of graduating seniors. Students were only included on the list if they responded to a survey in English class or over the telephone and gave the Shakerite permission to publish their post-high school plans.

Compiled by The Shakerite Senior Editors

Top 10 moments in class of 2004 history

10. 'May I see your I.D. please?'

The class of 2004 owns the last horizontal licenses in Ohio. A word of advice to underclassmen: attempting to buy lottery tickets or adult videos with your vertical licenses is probably a bad idea.

9. Ensemble never did *that* before

The Chinese acrobats' bendable bodies enthralled student onlookers as they balanced plates on their heads, contorted their body parts and performed other amazing stunts. This assembly was especially memorable because no one was aware that it was occurring beforehand, and the reasoning for the assembly, though appreciated, remains unknown.

8. Who knew you couldn't throw eggs?

After a suspicious egg-throwing incident and excessive student rowdiness, pep rallies were banned by the school district. Despite many attempts to bring the spirited events back, the school has not gathered formally to celebrate school spirit since. The class of 2004 was the last class to be blessed with pep rallies.

7. Shaker sticks it to competition

Freshman year hockey games came to a climactic ending at the Brooklyn Hockey rink as the Raiders clinched the state championship game against Padua. Later that year, Shaker women's lacrosse defeated Columbus Academy to capture their own state title. Shaker spirit was high again last year as the women's lacrosse team once again captured the state crown.

6. Duck! It's a flying chair

As Kari-Nicole Brown delivered her election speech for class secretary, a rabble-rouser who shall remain nameless decided that throwing a chair across the stage of the large auditorium would be an appropriate expression of his support for the candidate. Needless to say, this rocking incident changed the way council elections are now conducted.

5. Shaker and Verizon, sittin' in a tree

The only vibrating piece of machinery that interrupted classes our freshman year was the lawn mower in the courtyard. We encountered no downloaded rings, no text messages and no problems with service outside the large auditorium until sophomore year, when *the no-cell-phones-in-school rule was rescinded*.

4. No school on Wednesdays

The first snow day in five years was followed exactly a week later by a surprising electrical malfunction, which again rendered students and teachers incapable of attending school. It was almost too good to be true; almost, but not quite.

3. What happened to embracing diversity?

Shaker traditionally celebrates Black History Month with guest speakers, but the presenter in February 2001 packed a solid punch. Students listened in shock as Dr. Samella Abdullah accused approximately half the audience of being "white European oppressors" who exploited their African-American classmates. It was assumed, however, that her final benediction of "God bless you all" included even the fair-skinned tyrants.

2. 'Mike, you're gonna have to take that outside'

In the middle of Mr. Griffith's inspirational speech to the class of 2004 at the beginning of second semester, a strange sound broke the reverent silence of the large auditorium. Teachers and security guards searched for the poor soul who had forgotten to turn off his cell phone for the principal's address, but the perpetrator decided to answer from the podium. The call to Mr. Griffith's cell phone interrupted the class meeting for almost two full minutes.

1. The Dynasty is out, just not outside

Rain soaked the class of 2003 silly at their graduation, and instead of attempting to provide waterproof caps and gowns, the school opted to move graduation to the Palace Theater, far away from the Russell H. Rupp Field where graduation has traditionally been held. We can only hope that they will still serve red and white cupcakes.

Principal remembers his first graduating freshman class

FROM GRIFFITH, PAGE 1

Q: What effect do you think you've had on the class of 2004?

A: I hope that I have continued to help them have... an enthusiasm for learning. I think I am a very humanistic person and that I'm someone they can trust.

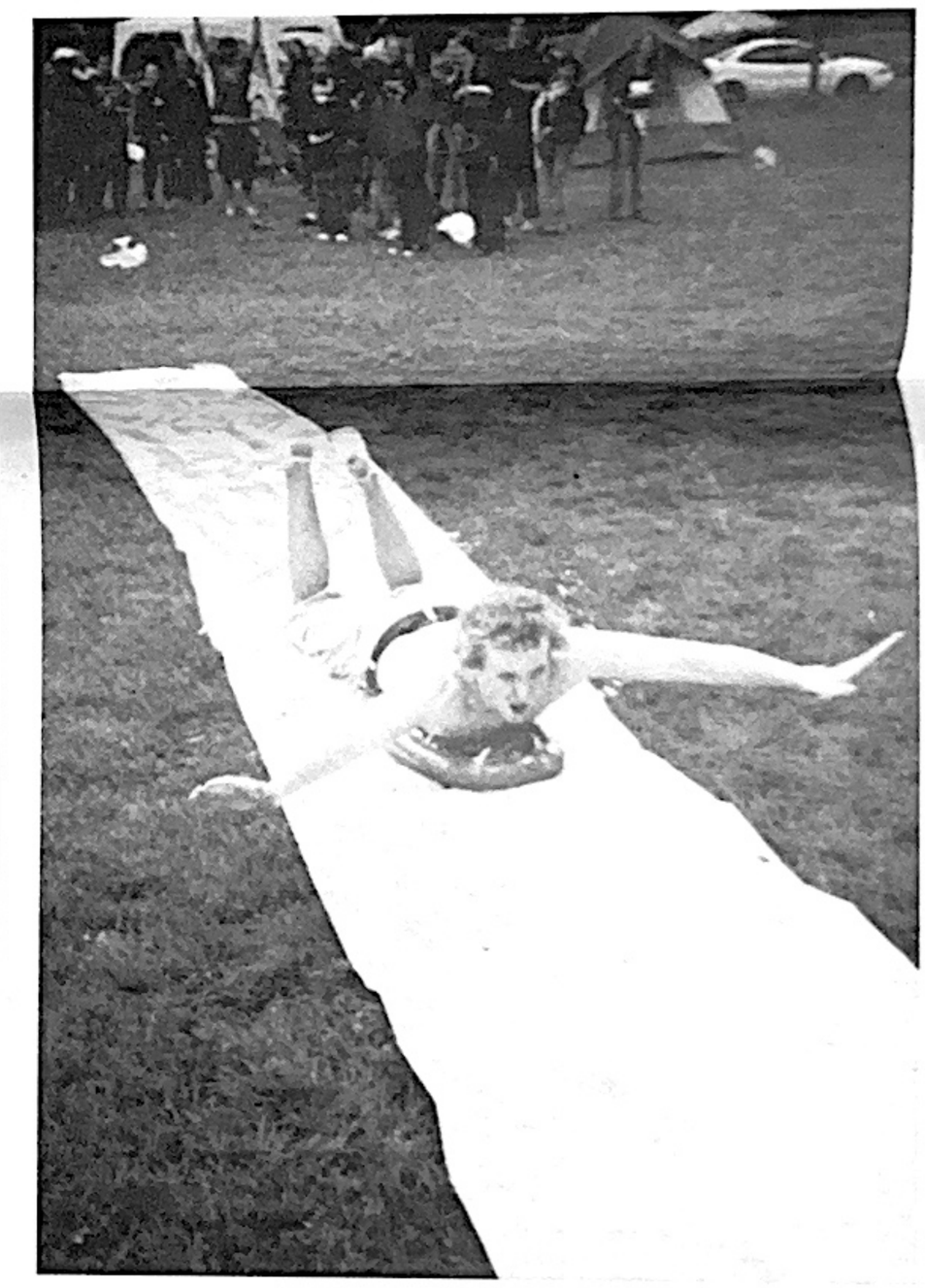
Q: What advice do you have for the class of 2004?

A: The advice I would have is: don't be afraid to talk about issues. If there's anything I want to improve on, I think the communication piece is vital, because then there's more trust. Be willing to put issues on the table that you think are important. We need to do that if we want to continue to grow.

Q: What are your final thoughts about the class of 2004?

A: Nothing is ever final because the book is still not finished being written for this group. I guess if I had to throw out words: academic excellence, maturity, just a tremendous camaraderie, just a good feeling about them as a group. In so many ways [they were] role models for their peers. It mattered to them to work with their peers. I'm very proud of this group. I take no credit for them; they're just who they are. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with them.

FOR THE CLASS OF 2004, LIFE'S A BEACH



Emily Ozan • THE SHAKERITE

SENIOR ALEX CAMPBELL takes a dive toward the slippery slope of the senior class honorary slip-and-slide. Despite chilly weather, project-bound seniors endured the rain and celebrated their final day of classes, few of which were attended.

Graduating seniors have unique plans for future

FROM GRADS, PAGE 1

theater while deferring her acceptance to Indiana University. Through the graduate program at the theater, she will be able to practice and perform with the dance company as an apprentice.

"The Pittsburgh Ballet Theater has always been a popular company," Mizer said. When she and a close friend found out about the program for pre-college students, they auditioned and were both accepted.

Unlike the parents of military-bound students, Mizer's are not worried.

"My parents know that school will always be there in the future, but you can only dance for so long," Mizer said.

For senior Ryan Stewart, taking even one year off before beginning his college education wasn't necessary in order for him to play out a long-time goal. While attending Thiel College next year, he will simultaneously play hockey for the Junior Pittsburgh Penguins by practicing once each class week and playing in the minor league Penguins' games around the country on weekends.

"I kinda wanted to do it for a while," Stewart said. "My friend told me about [the Penguins], and my coaches said I should go for it, so I tried out."

Stewart said that in general, others have been excited about his plans, with the temporary exception of his parents.

"They had mixed feelings at first but eventually they were OK with me being able to balance both [school and hockey]," Stewart said. He added that the Penguins' coach stresses the importance of schoolwork, and Stewart expects he'll be able to study on the long cross-country bus rides.

Though all of these students are defying the trend for Shaker graduates, Walker was still able to feel that he was following a line of tradition by joining the Marines.

"I come from a family that's always been in law enforcement and the military," said Walker, whose father is a policeman. "I wanted to keep that alive in the family."

The fact that his life-long aspirations will be realized next year makes it easy for Walker to stray from the norm in Shaker.

"It isn't hard to not stray from my dreams," Walker said.

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SENIOR PAGE EDITORS

2004